POLITICAL PARTIES

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO INDIA

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MADRAS

BY

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MAY 1940
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POLITICAL PARTIES

with special reference to India

LECTURE I

UNDER the Cripps proposals, which, though formally withdrawn, have been authoritatively stated to hold good, a constitution-making body will be set up after the cessation of hostilities to frame a new constitution for India. There is little doubt that this new constitution will be a democratic one. Even if certain provinces decide to keep out of the Indian Union, the constitutions established therein will be of a democratic type. Surveying the democratic constitutions of the world at the present day, there are, broadly speaking, three types: (1) the Anglo-Saxon, (2) the American, and (3) the Swiss type. Which of these types India will adopt, it is difficult to say. We have been repeatedly rebuked for our slavish admiration of and adherence to the British system of democratic Government and for our lack of political ingenuity

in devising a constitution adapted to our needs and historical traditions. There is much force in this criticism and the makers of our new constitution would do well to respect it and give it due weight. On the other hand, it has to be recognised that students of political science generally agree that the British type of parliamentary democracy is a more satisfactory system and yields better results than other forms of democratic Government. However this may be and whatever type India may finally adopt or even if we should follow the eclectic course of choosing and adapting the features of different types, the essential requisite for the successful working of a democratic Government is the organisation and continuous activity of genuine nation-wide political parties. In fact, it may be said without exaggeration, 'no parties, no democracy'. Those who deplore the existence and influence of political parties and sing the glories of the golden age when none was for a party and all were for the State do not understand the working or the machinery of democracy. As Lowell says,

"The conception of government by the whole people in any large nation is, of course, a chimera; for wherever the suffrage is wide, parties are certain to exist and the control must really be in the hands of the party that comprises a majority or a rough approximation to a majority of the people."

'J. S. Mill wrote an essay on Representative Government without mentioning parties at all. But any realistic study of the English constitution at the present day should deal with political parties in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end.' * So with the constitution of the United States of America and so also with regard to other democratic constitutions based on the English or the American model. The subject which I have chosen for my discourse is therefore one of vital interest and special significance for us in India. Without genuine political parties, there is no future for democracy or for responsible Government in our country and this will become clear when we study the organisation and working of political parties in modern democracies. I shall now proceed to a brief consideration of this

* Jennings: *British Constitution.*

matter. I shall then turn to the Indian scene and deal with Indian political parties as they are to-day and as they might be in the future.

Taking England first, we find well-organised nation-wide parties in continuous activity throughout the year. Except during war time or other emergencies when coalition Governments may be established, His Majesty's Government is a party Government, the Prime Minister is the leader of the party depending for its support and continued existence upon its majority in the House of Commons and control of that majority through whips, the party organisations, the central and the local caucuses and the threat of dissolution when the stability of the Government is endangered in Parliament. Similarly, the party in opposition is His Majesty's Opposition recognised as a vital and necessary element in the working of the constitution, the Leader of the Opposition being paid by the Government an annual salary for his work. His Majesty's Opposition has also got

its organisation, its whips, its central and local caucuses, its annual conferences and its shadow cabinets. The main functions of the British parties are: the selection of candidates for election; the planning and execution of the election campaign; the maintenance of party loyalty and party discipline; the formulation of long term policies and short term programmes, propaganda, research and the political education of the electorate. The British parties have a long history behind them and valued traditions. The characteristic feature of British politics is the two party system. Professor Namier has accounted for it in the following words:[1]

"First and foremost, the arrangement of benches in the House of Commons. The 'ins' and the 'outs' sit usually on opposite benches, facing each other. There is a clear line of division between them, a gulf in space, even if there is none so clear and sharp between their ideas. Location creates an atmosphere. The front benches are the protagonists, those behind them are supporters. A challenge thrown across, an angry look, a gesture of defiance is directed against, and caught up by the entire 'side'. Even a mere removal

1 *Conflicts—Studies in Contemporary History*, by Prof. Namier, pp. 203 & 204.

below the gangway tends to weaken these bonds. Nor can this auspicious, apposite arrangement be considered fortuitous; it expresses the instincts—nay, the genius—of the British race, who were the first to take games seriously, and who see the game underlying even the most serious transactions; and who have made the admonition 'play the game' into a most solemn moral exhortation. The arrangement of benches in the House of Commons reproduces the lay-out of a playing-field and fosters a team spirit. No one must intervene in a game from the flank and there is no place for a Centre party. The 'political pendulum' swings from side to side, and has only two points of arrest."

This is an interesting and ingenious explanation; but quite inadequate. Apart from historical causes for the origin of the two party system with which students of English constitutional history are familiar, there are certain powerful forces and factors which in spite of occasional appearances to the contrary have strengthened and perpetuated the system. The homogeneity of the population and particularly the striking homogeneity of British economic life before the Industrial Revolution have played an important part. The constitution itself has grown and evolved under the two party system and its working therefore

tends to maintain and perpetuate it. The single member system with straight voting favours the two main parties and operates against the middle parties. We shall realise the force of this fact when we come presently to deal with the decline of the Liberal Party. A general election in England is accepted as the means of choosing a Government, the question to be answered at the election being whether or not the Government shall be replaced by the Opposition. It is only a party that is capable of forming a Government that stands the chance of receiving much support. In the House of Commons a 'Middle Party' is in an extremely anomalous and uncomfortable position. English parliamentary procedure is based on the assumption that proposals are made by the Government and that the main debate takes place on a motion for rejection or amendment by the Opposition. A third party becomes sooner or later identified with one of the majority parties or if its members are to be found in both division lobbies, it is alleged not to be a party at all. The

establishment and maintenance of a party organisation and the conduct of an election campaign involve heavy financial responsibilities. Professor Jennings calculates that no party can manage on less than £50,000 a year, with another £25,000 in an election year. This prevents strong third parties being established. Such parties can at best be only small minority parties.

Until recently it was regarded as an axiom that parliamentary Government works best under a two-party system. It used to be contrasted with the continental group system which was held responsible for the weakness and instability of Governments in Europe. In Germany for instance in the pre-Nazi days, there were seven principal parties and many minor parties. Elections were conducted according to proportional representation based on the system known as 'Scrutin-de-liste' which requires the elector to vote not for individuals, but for 'party lists', in very large constituencies; for every quota of votes given to a party, one of its candidates

(beginning at the top of the list) was declared elected. This ensured the representation of all bodies of opinion in proportion to their strength. But it encouraged the multiplication of parties, and increased their rigidity and the difficulty of co-operation between them. For these reasons, it worked badly and perhaps helped to bring about the breakdown of democracy in Germany.[2]

Democratic France again had a confused mass of parties some of which were well-organised and nation-wide in character and others were quite small groups confined to particular areas. The radical-socialists, the socialists and the communists belong to the former category while in the case of the latter, the names changed from election to election, new groups appeared at every election and no one could tell beforehand exactly which groups would co-operate in the Government or in the Opposition nor the terms of co-operation nor the occasion of secession. And in every Chamber, there

2 Ramsay Muir: *The Future for Democracy*, p. 123.

were a number of members independent of any regular grouping. There were also electoral organisations which had no party in Parliament, *e.g.*, The Democratic Alliance. " It may be doubted whether the political system of any other country can show a similar example of a strong electoral organisation which had no corresponding party in Parliament ".[3] Practically every ministry was a coalition ministry uncertain of its existence from day to day and this together with the fact, that under the constitution, the ministry cannot dissolve the Chamber and appeal to the country and the absence of the English conventions of parliamentary loyalty and discipline resulted in the notorious instability and weakness of French Ministries. M. Briand appears to have remarked on one occasion that the day on which a French Prime Minister takes office is the day upon which one, at least, of his colleagues begins to prepare his downfall.[4] " Between 1873 and 1928, there were

3 Middleton: *The French Political System*, p. 73.

4 Laski: *Democracy in Crisis*, p. 96.

68 Cabinets, each Cabinet lived, on the average, a span of only nine and a half months. There were, counting cabinets of less than a week, 71 ministerial and parliamentary disturbances, a matter which has powerfully contributed to bringing parliamentary government into contempt."[5] Prof. Laski predicted several years ago that another war would bring the edifice of Parliamentarism in France crashing to the ground.[6] In Switzerland, again, there has been such a multiplication of tiny groups mainly owing to proportional representation that no coherent opinion has been able to emerge.

The two party system has however recently come in for serious criticism. The late Professor Ramsay Muir, for instance, denounced it in his works in unmeasured terms.[7] He went so far as to say that the two party system has been the cause of the

5 Herman Finer: *The Theory and Practice of Modern Governments*, Vol. 1, p. 158.

6 Laski: *Democracy in Crisis*, p. 43.

7 Muir: *How Britain is Governed* and *The Future for Democracy*.

gravest defects in the British system of Government. He argued that the two party system worked well enough in the days when parties were not elaborately organised and party principles and party discipline had not become rigid, and that it began to work badly when the parties came to be elaborately organised and strictly disciplined and when they began to impose upon their adherents strict and rigid doctrines. Since then and because of that change, ' the two party system has distorted the working of our system of Government and it has distorted also the expression of the nation's mind in elections '. He has also illustrated his point by reference to the election of 1929 when the two party system was not working, three parties being in the field in every part of the country. In this election, the Conservatives obtained 38 per cent of the votes cast, the Labour Party 37 per cent and the Liberal Party 23 per cent. He argues that the Liberal Party or rather the three party system saved the country from a ' monstrous distortion of representative Government '. He says

that a straight-forward two party contest between the Conservatives and the Socialists would have falsified the real verdict of the nation.

"It was only the effective interposition of a third party which enabled the nation not only to give a clear verdict, but to do what, by a large majority it wanted to do, namely, (1) to get rid of the Conservative Ministry, and (2) to replace it with a Ministry which would be debarred from carrying out Socialist measures." 8

To get rid of the two party system, he advocates the abolition of single-member constituencies with straight voting and the introduction of proportional representation based on the single transferable vote.

This is all special pleading and thoroughly unconvincing. It is only under the two party system that the people at a general election can directly choose its Government. So chosen, the Government gets a free hand to carry out its programme. If it fails badly or if it makes serious mistakes, the electorate throws it out at the next election and gives a chance to the

8 Muir: *How Britain is Governed*, pp. 151-2.

Opposition. The group system means that no Government can be formed until after the people had chosen the Legislative Assembly. It means coalition Governments and constant reshuffling of groups. Proportional representation based on the single transferable vote would, it is true, represent all shades of opinion more accurately than at present. But this is a doubtful advantage and in any case, it is offset by serious disadvantages. The public mind does not care for nice shades of quantitative distinction. On all important questions, the vast millions of voters cannot do more than accept or reject the solutions offered. The electorate has neither the leisure nor the information to do more than indicate the general tendency of its will. Nor is it true that a party's doctrines and principles are excessively rigid. In England, for instance, each party contains a wide variety of opinion indicated by the terms the Right Wing, the Centre and the Left Wing of a party. Proportional representation, in whatever form, would destroy the personal relations between a member and his consti-

tuents. It would strengthen the hold of the party machine and would increase the number of vagaries which obscure the clash of real issues. Parties will tend to break up and split into groups leading to the fragmentisation of the national assembly. Above all, the result will be weak Governments devoid of that body of support which is necessary to plan and operate a great programme. Professors of Political Science are therefore generally agreed that parliamentary government produces the best results when it expresses itself through the opposition of two great parties.

This, however, does not mean that a country devising a new democratic constitution for itself can, as a matter of political machinery, establish the two party system. As we have seen, in England that system was the result of a long historical growth dating back to the seventeenth century. The homogeneity of the population, and particularly the homogeneity of social and economic life in the period when parties arose and grew up, powerfully

contributed to this. Similarly, as we shall see, political organisation on the basis of the two party system took place in the United States of America under specially favourable conditions. In continental Europe, on the contrary, social and other conditions and the environment were different and led to the formation of numerous parties. In pre-Nazi Germany for instance, there were parties of the Right, of the Centre and of the Left, some founded upon a religious basis like the Centre Party, some founded on a racial or national basis like the Bavarian National Party, the German Hanoverian Party and the National Minorities like the Polish Party and the Lithuanian Party, and a number of parties formed for the furtherance of particular economic interests like the party of the Middle Class, the Land Union, the Peasants Party, etc. Among the right parties, there were the National Socialists and on the left, the German State or Constitutional Party, the Social Democratic Party and the Com-

munist Party.[9] I have already referred to the group system in France. Other European countries which created a democratic constitution for themselves during the period after the last war, followed the French rather than the Anglo-Saxon system in this respect. The natural human tendency is towards separatism and differences of race, religion, nationality and class and economic interest accentuate this tendency. Political institutions may either promote or counteract this tendency and experience shows that the single-member majority system counteracts it while proportional representation in whatever form promotes it. The bearing of this discussion on the future of Indian political parties will be elucidated at a later stage.

I shall now proceed to consider certain important matters relating to the structure and composition and the policy and programme of British political parties. In recent party history, the most striking phenomenon has been the decline—I had almost

9 Herman Finer, Vol. I, p. 559.

said the collapse —of the Liberal Party. This party governed the country independently from 1906 to 1915 and in coalition with the Conservative Party from 1915 to 1922. In 1906, the party had 376 seats in Parliament. To-day, it has 20. In bye-elections since 1935, the Liberal Party has sunk to an even weaker position. The main cause of this decline was the great split between the supporters of Asquith and of Lloyd George. Will there be a recovery and has the Liberal Party a future? The bulk of the Liberals do not admit that the party is dying. They believe that, during its present years of travail, the party is gradually re-fashioning a faith of its own. Ramsay Muir who was a leading Liberal politician argued that the three parties of the future will not be three sections of the same straight line with liberalism in the central position insensibly shading off into the other two, but will have the relation of the three angles of a triangle each definitely opposed to the other two, yet each linked with the other two and having some points

in common with both.[10] In consonance with this view, the Liberal Party has made violent changes in its policy and programme during the last fifteen years. In 1928, the party was opposed to uncontrolled individualism and was in favour of the public ownership of essential utilities. It advocated the creation of an Economic General Staff to frame national economic policy. In 1938, however, the party issued a new statement 'Ownership for All', which denounced collectivism and national planning and advocated *Laisser-Faire* and individualism. "On the one hand", says the statement, "stand the various collectivist or quasi-collectivist systems—fascism, nazism, socialism, planned capitalism. On the other stands liberalism." It went so far as to recommend that London transport should revert to private capitalist competition though the socialisation of transport in London was specifically recommended in Liberal policy ten years before. The central feature of the new policy is the recommen-

10 **Muir:** ***Politics and Progress.***

dation that property should be more evenly divided by means of fiscal and other measures put into effect by the government. The fact is that, finding itself in danger of extinction between the rival forces of conservatism and socialism, the Liberal Party has sought to preserve itself by developing a distinctive doctrine shared by neither. With the same object, this party has been strongly in favour of substituting proportional representation with the single transferable vote for the present single member system and it is significant that the other two parties have definitely set their face against this proposal. I venture to express the view that the Liberal Party is extremely unlikely to recover the position it has lost and that, sooner rather than later, the two party equilibrium of British politics will be restored.

Another equally important and striking phenomenon during the last twenty-five years has been the rise and growth of the Labour Party. When it was originally formed in 1900 under the name of the

Labour Representation Committee by the co-operation of Trade Unions, the Independent Labour Party and the Fabian Society, it had only two Labour members in Parliament. In the election of 1906, it secured 30 seats and in the election of 1910, 40. It was however too weak to play an effective part and remained as the appendage of the Liberal Party then in power. Nearly all the Labour M.Ps held their seats by Liberal as well as Labour votes and the party itself was a Trade Union and social reform party depending upon the Liberals for putting into effect instalments of its demands. Only with the disintegration of liberalism during the war and the great increase in Trade Union membership due to war conditions, was Labour able to set up as a nation-wide party with some sort of organisation in nearly every constituency. The Labour Party, as it exists to-day, dates essentially from the new Party Constitution of 1918. The most important change under this new constitution was the direct admission of individual members. Till then the party had been only a federation of

certain Trade Unions and Socialist Societies. Divisional and local Labour Parties came into existence and the party acquired a nation-wide organisation based on individual as well as affiliated membership. At the same time, there was a new declaration of policy—'Labour and the New Social Order' which thoroughly and explicitly committed the party as a whole to socialism as its objective. At the general election of 1922, it secured 142 seats, emerging as the second largest party in the State and thereby became the official Opposition. In 1924 and again in 1929, it was enabled to assume office with Ramsay Macdonald as Prime Minister. As we shall presently see, this remarkable progress of the Labour Party is of the profoundest significance for the future of British parliamentary institutions.

The main criticism against the Labour Party is that it is dominated by Trade Unions which provide the bulk of its membership and of its funds. This is true and it is also true that by the power of the

'block vote' the Trade Unions determine all major issues and effectively control the policy of the Labour Party. In this respect, it may be noted that it is different from the Socialist Parties of Europe and the U.S.A., which are organised entirely on the basis of individual membership and which are Marxist in their ideology. English socialism, on the contrary, has been more of the evolutionary and Fabian type; but as Mr. Attlee points out,[11] it is not fair to describe the Labour Party as being entirely in the hands of Trade Union bosses, its leaders going cap in hand to get their orders from their task-masters and paymasters. The domination of the Trade Unions does not prevent Labour leaders from stating their aims in clear and uncompromising terms and there is a recognition of their partnership in action on behalf of the workers and of their freedom of action in their respective spheres. With a view to secure the greatest amount of co-operation, there has been created the National Council of Labour on

11 *The Labour Party in Perspective.*

which sit representatives of the Trade Union Congress, the Labour Party Executive and the Parliamentary Labour Party.

Owing to the predominance of the Trade Unions, the Labour Party has sometimes been denounced as a 'Class Party'. It is true that it is largely composed of the proletariat wage-earners in industry and agriculture. But it also attracts the subordinate ranks of the civil service and a number of its members belong to wealthy and middle class families and young 'intellectuals' to whom socialism and the ideal of social justice make a strong appeal. Members of the Church of England—Parsons and Curates—are inclined to support Labour, Quakers have long supported it and non-conformists are rapidly turning away from Liberal to Labour. Nor, as we shall see, can it be labelled as a purely Class Party if we take its policy and aims into consideration. Socialism aims at a better social order. The Labour Party sincerely believes that the realisation of its ideals will

be of benefit to all and not to the working classes only. Of course parties are not formed on the basis of mental attitudes only. There is a close correspondence between a country's economic interests and its political parties. Political parties are in that sense organs of class interests. If the Labour Party is a class party, the Conservative Party is no less so, being dominated by the City and by Big Business. "The great autocrat, the landowner, the financier, the rentier, the business man, these have overwhelmingly predominated in its Councils."[12] The Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill, recently described the Indian National Congress as a political organisation built around a party machine and sustained by certain manufacturing and financial interests. This is perhaps a truer and more appropriate description of the British Conservative Party of which Mr. Churchill is the leader. At any rate, it is a case of the pot calling the kettle black.

12 Laski: *Parliamentary Government in England*, p. 81.

"For over sixty years, there have been Conservative working-men's associations in Great Britain, yet between them, over the whole period, seventeen general elections for over 600 constituencies have not produced as many working-class candidates for the Conservative Party as the Labour Party has had in every general election since 1906...... No child of working-class parents has ever sat in a Conservative Cabinet; ....Until the advent of the Labour Party in 1906, as a separate force in British politics, it is notable that the most numerous class in the nation was virtually without representation in the House of Commons".[13]

The basic character of the Conservative Party has recently been trenchantly exposed with detailed documentation regarding its personnel by Simon Haxey:[14]

"The great majority of Conservative M.P.'s have at least one common interest in private life for they all desire the Government to facilitate the pursuit of profit."

While the funds of the Labour Party are derived largely from the levies voluntarily imposed upon themselves by members of the Trade Unions, the sources of the funds of the Conservative Party are secret or at least cannot be stated with certainty. It

13 Laski: *Democracy in Crisis*, p. 223.

14 *Tory M. P.*, (Gollancz, 1939), p. 46.

is however well known that the party mainly depends upon large contributions from wealthy men. As Mr. Ramsay Muir points out, 'when a man subscribes £ 10,000 to a party fund, he follows the scriptural injunction and does not let his left hand know what his right hand has done.'[15] No small part of the Conservative Party Funds have been raised by a private sale of honours and the matter became so much of a scandal during the coalition ministry of Lloyd George from 1917-22 that a Royal Commission was appointed to enquire into the matter.

There are some striking differences between the Conservative and the Labour Parties with regard to structure and organisation and the formulation of policies and programmes. Though the Liberal Party took the lead in the formation of the National Liberal Federation in 1877 at the inspiration of Chamberlain and with the organising ability of Schnadhorst, it was

15 Muir: *How Britain is Governed*, p. 134.

the Conservative Party that organised its central office and its bureaucracy on more or less autocratic lines. When English critics denounce the Congress caucus, the tyranny of the Congress High Command and the dictatorship of Mahatma Gandhi they seem to forget or to display curious ignorance about their own party organisations. Policies are shaped and programmes are planned in the Conservative Party from above by the party leaders and the central office. The leader of the party is not chosen by any democratic method—in fact, he practically chooses himself. He is virtually a dictator and he can and has often committed the party to a particular line of action on his own authority. The methods of the Labour Party are comparatively more democratic. While Conservative Party conferences pass resolutions that may or may not be acted upon, the annual conference of the Labour Party lays down the policy of the party and issues instructions which must be carried out by the Executive, the affiliated organisations and its representatives in Parliament and

on local authorities. In some cases, the delegates come to the conference closely bound by instructions. Other differences are that the Chairman of the Labour Party and the leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party are both formally elected by their respective organisations and that party candidates cannot be put up for election until their selection has been approved by the Executive at Headquarters.

"Mr. Peter Howard, who was a delegate to the Scarborough conference of the Conservative Party in 1937, compares it with the Bournemouth conference of the Labour Party, which he attended on behalf of the *Sunday Express*:

"Make no mistake. At these annual conferences the Socialists have the Tories beaten. Bournemouth was alive. Scarborough was dead. At Bournemouth almost every Labour M.P. and every Trade Union leader turned up. Not 5% of the 370 Tory M.Ps went to Scarborough. Bournemouth—first-rate oratory. Scarborough—second-rate speeches...... Mr. Attlee, the Socialist chieftain, sat on the platform listening to almost every speech. Mr. Chamberlain was only present at Scarborough while one speech was being delivered. That was the speech he made himself.

"While one Tory delegate was speaking I counted 16 members on the platform party doing crossword puzzles. At Bournemouth every speech was heard with interest. At Scarborough, when the less important

delegates were talking, their words were lost in the tramp of feet moving out of the conference hall to the bar.

"At Bournemouth, plenty of controversy...... At Scarborough, no controversy. While I was there not a single dissentient vote was cast against any of the resolutions. Does this mean that every Tory delegate thought alike on every subject? No. It means that no subject about which Tories differ was allowed to be discussed at the Tory conference. The Tories have a secret committee who turn down controversial resolutions submitted to them.

"From Bournemouth the delegates went away enthusiastic. From Scarborough the delegates were enthusiastic to get away."[16]

The greatest and most important of all controversies between British political parties at the present day is over the question of socialism. The Socialist dream of a community in which the motive of private profit is replaced by that of public service is regarded, by Conservative and Liberal alike, as inadmissible. The Labour Party seeks to persuade the people of Britain that the adoption of socialism would lead to an increase in national happiness. It has issued a statement of its 'Immediate

16 Simon Haxey: *Tory M.P.*, pp. 191 & 192.

Programme' which specifies the measures which a majority Labour Government would seek to carry through in a five years' term of office. The expansion of the social services such as education, health, housing, etc., a rapid fall in unemployment and national planning for depressed areas are not so contentious and may be acceptable to the Conservative Party; but the programme includes a set of socialisation proposals. The industries and services which the Labour Party propose to socialise immediately are (1) The Bank of England; (2) Rural land; (3) Transport; (4) Coal; (5) Electricity; (6) Gas; (7) Armaments. It is these proposals which cause the great cleavage of principle in British politics at the present day. Professor Jennings has argued[17] that these socialisation proposals do not create a fundamental opposition between the National Government and the Labour Party, that the Labour Party's programme is socialist reformism and the National Government's programme is re-

17 *The British Constitution*, pp. 47-50.

formism without the adjective and that the difference between the two parties is one of more or less. Mr. Jennings compares the 1935 programmes of the National Government and the Labour Party and endeavours to show that, while the differences are real and acute, there is much in the Labour programme with which a good Conservative might agree and much in the programme of the National Government with which the Opposition could agree. Some of the brilliant speakers in the Left Wing of the Labour Movement tend to exaggerate the divergence between two parties; but as the people who dominate the Labour Party are moderates, politicians like Mr. Attlee or Mr. Dalton or political organisers like Mr. Herbert Morrison or Trade Union organisers like Mr. Bevin, there is really no fundamental cleavage. Both parties are trying to catch about 750,000 votes among the lower middle class section of the people upon whom neither party can absolutely rely for support. And it is this 'floating vote' that determines the success in an election. 'As both parties are offering bait

to the same fish', they cannot afford to differ fundamentally in their programmes. There is considerable force in this view. Labour and Conservative Parties may strongly disagree as to whether socialism is a good thing or not; but they both agree that democracy is a good thing. Unlike the Fascists on the one side and the Communists on the other, these two British parties agree to work the democratic system. In quite recent years, the Centre and the Left of the Conservative Party have twice defeated anti-democratic campaigns by its Right. In 1934, the attempt led by Lord Salisbury to increase the power of the House of Lords was defeated by the Centre and the Left of the party. Again, in 1935, the Right Wing led by Mr. Churchill fought against the Government of India Bill. This campaign was also defeated by the Conservative Centre and the Left. In 1928, the Conservative Government enfranchised the younger women who previously had no vote, and in 1936, the National Government checked the activity of the British Fascist Party by prohibiting political uniforms and

private arms. Again, the record of Conservatism since the last war shows that it is not against the extension of social services; and, though it objects to socialism on principle, it has actually socialised a fair number of industries and services. On the other hand, it may be asked, does the Labour Party take its socialism seriously? When the Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929 failed to take advantage of their position to experiment with socialist principles and when the Party emerged after the election of 1931, weak, leaderless and with a disillusioned rank and file, there was much searching of heart regarding the future of the Labour Party. Mr. R. H. Tawney diagnosed the cause of the debacle of the Labour Party to be 'pernicious anaemia producing general futility'.[18] Though socialism had been proclaimed as the creed of the Party in 1918, the leaders of the Party were timid and half-hearted in their faith and they failed to take steps

18 *The Political Quarterly*, July-September 1932, "The Choice before the Labour Party", by R. H. Tawney.

for educating the rank and file in the principles of socialism.[19] Owing to the quarrels between the Labour Party and the I.L.P., the work of turning Labour supporters into keen and active socialists was left undone. While the Labour Party had created an effective electoral machine, it failed to create an effective organisation for socialist-making propaganda. What the Party therefore sadly lacked was the inspired and understanding keenness of a nucleus of real socialists as the driving force behind the machine.

Under the stress of the present war and as a matter of national expediency, the Labour Party entered the national government and accepted the 'Electoral Truce'. This was of course necessary in the interests of the nation and for the efficient prosecution of the war. But what is to happen when peace comes? Powerful sections of the Labour Party are already showing their impatience of the Electoral Truce and at the last annual conference of

19 G. D. H. Cole: *British Working Class Politics*, p. 250.

the Party, an assurance was given by Mr. Attlee on behalf of the Executive that the truce would be abandoned at the end of the war. Laski stated that complete proposals for the reorganisation of society would be ready for consideration when the conference met the next year. The National Government has accepted great portions of the Beveridge Plan; but sections of the Labour Party are angry and discontented because certain important proposals of the Beveridge Plan have not been accepted or have been whittled down and more because the National Government has refused to give immediate effect to the proposals on the ground that they cannot commit the post-war Government to the financial outlay involved. The Labour amendment in the House of Commons condemning the Government attitude to the Beveridge Plan was however rejected by 335 votes against 119. In a recent broadcast Mr. Churchill outlined what the National Government proposed to do after the war. It was really a manifesto for the post-war general election. He offered on behalf of the National

Government a carefully prepared Four Year Plan, the chief items of which were national compulsory insurance for all classes of people, improvement of British agriculture, reform and expansion of the social services such as health and education and the maintenance of employment. But its negatives were more important. The present Government cannot commit the post-war Government to any great new expenditure by the State. The existing level of direct taxation cannot be continued. No post-war plan must impair revival at the earliest moment of 'a wide-spread, healthy and vigorous private enterprise'. If, as is likely, party politics should be resumed after the war, the Labour Party will appeal to the country with a definite socialist programme which will be fundamentally opposed to the programme of the Conservative Party. What will happen? Mr. Churchill indicated that he would form his post-war Government from the best men in all parties who were willing to serve if he could not get support from the recognised parties. If he succeeds in this attempt,

some form of National Government will continue after the war, but it does not seem likely that the Labour Party will co-operate. The future of such a Government will depend almost entirely on the capacity of the capitalist system to go on providing concessions to the working classes and to deal with unemployment. Sooner or later, financial and other considerations will make this difficult if not impossible and the issue of socialism will have to be squarely faced. Then will come the strain in the working of party and parliamentary Government. Prof. Laski in several of his works[20] has developed this thesis and advanced powerful arguments in support of the view that British Parliamentary Government may completely break down if and when a Labour Government assumes office with a stable majority. The Labour Governments of 1924 and 1929 were minority Governments and the Labour Party was betrayed by its leader who deserted the party just for a

20 *Parliamentary Government in England, Democracy in Crisis.*

'riband to stick in his coat'. A Labour Government with a stable majority will be a very different thing. As soon as it comes to power, it will have to take steps for implementing its socialist programme. If it fails to do so, the Labour Party would be split from top to bottom with immense defections from its ranks to the communists who are likely to grow in strength as the result of the recent liquidation of the Comintern. On the other hand, will capitalism meekly submit to the revolutionary changes which a Labour Government will introduce? In Italy and Germany, Parliamentary Government and democracy were overthrown even before socialist legislation was attempted, "the debate merely, was sufficient to throw property into a panic and achieve the Fascist State".[21] A Labour Government, if it meant business, would have to take emergency powers to deal with any financial or industrial 'sabotage'. As Mr. Tawney says,

21 Laski: *Parliamentary Government in England*, p. 101.

> "If there is any country where the privileged classes are simpletons, it is certainly not England. If their position is seriously threatened, they will use every piece on the board, political and economic—the House of Lords, the Crown, the Press, disaffection in the army, financial crisis, international difficulties and even, as newspaper attacks on the pound last summer showed, the emigre trick of injuring one's country to protect one's pocket—in the honest conviction that they are saving civilisation." 22

Illustrating his argument by reference to what happened during the Ulster crisis in 1913-14 and the crisis of 1931 which drove Liberals and Conservatives into an alliance in the coupon election, to the attempts made for strengthening the House of Lords, and for reviving the Crown's veto power, Prof. Laski concludes that there is very little justification for optimism regarding the continued stability of Parliamentary Government and democracy in England when a Labour Government seriously attempts to build up socialism and economic equality. The party system worked satisfactorily so long as there was agreement between the two parties on fundamental

22 R. H. Tawney: *The Choice before the Labour Party*, in *Political Quarterly*, July–Sept., 1932, p. 337.

issues. The period of its consolidation was one of continuous and remarkable economic expansion which has now ceased. With the coming of socialism into practical politics, such agreement has disappeared and Prof. Laski's fear is that party government and along with it the whole machinery of Parliamentary democracy as we know it now will break down. Prof. Ernest Barker in his recent work, *Reflections on Government*, has severely criticised Prof. Laski's thesis. He characterises it and the doctrine of the class-war on which it is based as 'buckram logic', as 'intellectual abstractions hatched in the schools of neo-scholasticism'. He warns us against them in the following words:[23]

> "It is not the social facts of our time which are dangerous: it is rather the social doctrines. It is perfectly possible for democracy to work, and to work well, on the basis of existing social facts and existing social temper. It is possible for a party of the Right and a party of the Left to exist and act in the same society both acting on democratic principles; each seeking to win a majority; and each willing, if it wins what it seeks, to come to some agreement with the minority, and to make some compromise with it which

23 Barker: *Reflections on Government*, p. 120.

it will consent to accept. But the possibility may be killed. The spirit of democracy—and with it the system, which can only exist when it is informed by the spirit—may be extinguished. A dualistic abstraction, urged as a gospel, and urged until it creates the reality of dualism, may become the great and compelling factor in human life; and if that happens the presuppositions of democracy will have vanished. There will be no single society; there will be no common terms of debate; there will be difference of opinion far too acute for any agreement to differ, and divisions of policy far too deep to be bridged by any compromise."

U.S.A. The constitution of the United States works, like that of Britain, under a dual party system; but the differences are more striking than the resemblances. "What generalisation is nearest the truth" asks Prof. Finer, "if we wish to compare American 'with English parties'? It is this paradox, that America has only one party, the Republican cum Democratic, divided into two nearly equal halves by habit, the contest for office, the Republican being one-half and the Democratic the other half of the party." And the same point has been piquantly brought out by Bryce in *Modern Democracies*. He says that the two American parties are like two bottles con-

taining the same liquid; but with different labels. The fact is, there is so little to differ about. The written, rigid constitution has settled a number of issues and removed them from controversy. If any of these issues happens to be raised, it is at once put down as unconstitutional, and it is a well-known fact in American history that constitutional amendments have been effected not by the activity of the majority parties, but by specific movements organised for the purpose by third parties (*e.g.* slavery, prohibition). Again, a large field of administration has been taken away from the Central Federal Government and left to the States. The separation of powers with its checks and balances is another serious difficulty which stands in the way of prompt and vigorous legislative action based on a party programme. The geographic, economic and cultural features of America, the fact that the bulk of the nation is middle class and that there are tremendous fields of industry and commerce to be exploited, reduce the number of political

issues, the pressure for fundamental change is much weaker and party programmes and policies therefore become devitalised. Party differences mainly revolve round the question of protection by tariff for one industry rather than another. American books on political science insist on the importance of parties because they organise voters and put forward candidates. The creation of a programme and the pursuit of an ideal are of secondary importance. Neither party can initiate a vital new policy without grave risk to its existence. Another curious feature is that sections of one party have co-operated with sections of the other against their own party as was illustrated in the recent over-riding by the Congress of the President's veto of the Anti-Strike Bill.

The characteristics of American party organisation such as the caucus, the ring, the bosses, are too well-known and need not be described in detail. The Spoils system, the enormous number of elective offices—about 50,000—the political assessment of

officials, the log-rolling, the share in the pork-barrel, the jack-pot, are other features which have given a peculiarly bad name to American parties. On account of their malignant effects, public opinion was aroused and a wave of reform led to legislation to curb the activities of party organisations and check the power of the bosses. "Nowhere has the power of party organisation been greater than in the United States and nowhere has there been a more vigorous attempt to restrict and control the party organisation than here."[24] From the National Committee to the Precinct Committee, there is a hierarchy of bodies to put forward candidates to carry on the election campaign and to elect the officials. There are about 100,000 Precinct Captains for each of the major Parties.

"Ballot laws, detailed regulation of nominating processes, and of the organisation of party commitees, legislation against the spoils system, the appeal to independency and the formation of competing parties, the counter-organisation within the party itself, the effort to develop conspicuous leadership within the government, sometimes by law, and some-

24 C. E. Merriam: *The American Party System*, p. 101.

times by custom; all these have been characteristic of our time."[25]

The most important of these reforms are the Direct Primary which is a protest against the unrepresentative character of cliques and rings controlling conventions and dictating nominations and the removal of a considerable number of offices—mainly federal—from the operation of the spoils system. There has been considerable discussion as to how far these reforms have been effective; the general conclusion is that they have not been devoid of beneficial results. But it has to be realised that the complexity of the constitution, the general tone and level of the electorate and the capitalistic organisation of industrial society have produced these pathological conditions in the American party system. There are however hopeful signs of a radical cure. Under President Roosevelt's leadership, the platform of the Democratic Party with its new deal has been vitalised. " The shifty practice of attempting to write

25 C. E. Merriam: *The American Party System*, p. 100.

a platform that will appear to be all things to all men and that actually means nothing to anybody has been almost entirely abandoned."[26] The growth of the Socialist Party is another hopeful feature. As Mr. Merriam points out[27]

> "The modifications in our political organisation, both by statute and by custom, the alterations in the economic and social basis of the party system, the gradual change in the political mores, the infiltration of science into human life, will all have their weight in determining the form and activities of the future party system. The surviving parties will be weaker in organisation and stronger in morale, with less of patronage and more of principles, with less of the spirit of spoils and more of the desire for community service."

Totalitarian States. I am mainly concerned in these lectures with political parties in modern democracies; but the world today is witnessing what Spengler calls the return of the Caesars and a word has to be said about the new dictatorships and the new political phenomenon of the single party which has come into existence

26 G. W. Johnson: *Roosevelt—An American Study*, p. 179.

27 C. E. Merriam: *The American Party System*, p. 42.

and flourished in the period since the war of 1914-18.

Prof. Ernest Barker in his recent work, *Reflections on Government,* has given us a detailed, comprehensive and most valuable analysis of the forms and characteristics of the single party system. There are certain obvious points of resemblance between the dictatorships of Russia, Italy and Germany. In each case, one Party—the Communist, the Fascist, the Nazi—has succeeded in overthrowing or destroying all other parties and seizing the reins of government. It is no longer a party of the traditional democratic type; "it is an 'order' or 'élite' which, while it recruits itself from all sections of the people, is in itself exclusive (or 'shut') and hierarchically led".[28] It is the authorised agent of the dictatorship and State, Society and the economic structure are dominated by it and have been transformed—though the extent of the transformation may differ through its agency.

28 Barker: *Reflections on Government,* p. 291.

But the differences in form and substance between Russia on the one hand and Italy and Germany on the other are more profound and fundamental than the similarities. "In Russia, the Communist Party is not included in the constitution of the State as one of its formal elements; it has no formal rights; whatever it does, it does *de facto* in virtue of the influence which it exercises or through the presence of its individual members on the governing bodies of the State: but not in virtue of any *de jure* power with which it is legally vested."[29] The position is different in Italy and Germany where the Fascists and the Nazi parties have become constitutional organs of the State. Compare *e.g.*, the Law of December 9, 1928 in Italy and the Law for safeguarding the unity of Party and State in Germany of December 2, 1933. Again, though Stalin has established a kind of personal dictatorship from his position as Secretary of the Communist Party, the rank and file membership expresses itself

29 Barker, *op. cit.*, pp. 296–297.

effectually from below in the building of socialist policy. In Germany the principle of leadership from above is paramount. " It is the core not only of the constitution of the party, but also of its doctrine."[30] The party—and this is true of Italy also—assumed a military uniform and became a new sort of militia standing side by side with the regular army of the nation. The policy which the leaders think suitable is enforced upon the party by the arts of discipline and propaganda. In Russia, though leadership may be actually present and active, it is doubtful if a single central leadership is an essential factor of the nature and action of the party. The ' leader principle ' has not been enthroned as in Germany and perhaps in Italy and is not regarded as the pivot of the general life of the community. To quote Barker:

> "In the Russian State there is thus a large apparatus of political authorities professing a democratic character or origin which surrounds the hidden leader; and Russian Society, in its trade unions and other unions of producers and in its co-operative societies

30 Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

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of consumers, presents (or professes to present) a similar apparatus of democratic social authorities; we may add that the communist party itself, in its own internal constitution, is similarly constituted; it is built up from below by election and presents (or professes to present) its own apparatus of democratic party authorities parallel to the similar political and social authorities ".[31]

Even more profound are the differences in the ends or aims pursued by Russia on the one hand and Germany and Italy on the other. Russia is building up a new democracy founded on the principle of economic equality. Italy and Germany have repudiated democracy altogether. The Soviet system as it has been reconstituted by the constitution of 1936 may reasonably be characterised as a new type of parliamentary democracy.

"The people represented by the Supreme Council is a people of 'toilers' from which those who do not toil (perhaps one-fiftieth of the whole) are necessarily excluded. The economy is an economy predominantly of public ownership vested in the State or in co-operative farms or other co-operative bodies: the element of private ownership (though it exists and though the general economy is to that extent mixed) is a subordinate element. The dictatorship of the

31 Barker: *op. cit.*, p. 299.

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> proletariat thus remains, though the proletariat has been extended until it is almost the whole of society; and the socialization of the great mass of property equally remains. There is nothing to prove that democracy may not be democracy when it is conjoined with the general socialization of property or even (though this is more dubious) when it is conjoined with the temporary disfranchisement of a section of the population and the domination of the rest ".[32]

The most serious disqualification of Russian democracy is of course the existence of only one party and only one set of social and political ideas. " So long as one general line is demanded, one ideology is prescribed, and one party alone is permitted, the necessary conditions of a democratic State are necessarily absent ".[33]

But Russia has passed through a great revolution and in the interests of stability it was inevitable that all forms of revisionism should be suppressed. The strength and vitality of that revolution have been gloriously vindicated in the present great

32 Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

33 Barker, *op. cit.*, p. 324.

war and it is to be hoped—there are plenty of signs to strengthen that hope—that in course of time, real parties may grow and function and that Russia will lead the world as the creator of the new democracy.

LECTURE II

I will now consider certain outstanding matters regarding Indian political parties. Are they genuine political parties? A recent writer who appears to have come to India for the purpose of studying and reporting upon social and political conditions in India writes as follows:

> "The politics of British India have for long been dominated by the Congress and in the whole world, there is perhaps no political party which altogether resembles it. It is a collection of almost every conceivable interest and type of personality. It includes millionaires, mill-workers, land-lords, peasants, saints, gangsters, professors, experts in international affairs, parochialists, liberals, anarchists, communists, ascetics, fanatical Moslims, and fanatical Hindus; and its liability is a large supply of visionaries...... Its annual session—in atmosphere part, gipsy encampment, part, football match, part, parish bazaar—must be next to the Nazi rallies at Nurenberg, the most astonishing political sight of the modern world, indeed in its rustic simplicity even more successfully ostentatious than the Nazi glitter and display."[1]

1 George Schuster and Guy Wint: *India and Democracy.*

The author Guy Wint is apparently trying to be clever and striving after effect. Ridiculing the Congress and sneering at it is a cheap form of amusement for some English tourists. If, however, what is meant is that Congress is composed of diverse elements, that, indeed, is a fact and it is natural and inevitable that a national organisation should be so constituted. As the main problem in India is the great struggle for freedom from alien rule, the Congress cannot be regarded as a purely political party in the narrow sense. It is a powerful organisation working for the attainment of freedom for India. It is the spearhead of the national movement. At its birth Englishmen played a prominent part. Mr. A. O. Hume, who had retired from the post of a Secretary to Government, is generally regarded as the father of the Indian National Congress. It may not be generally known that while Mr. Hume was more keen on social reform, it was the Viceroy at the time, the Marquis of Dufferin, who suggested that the new orga-

nisation should include political activity also.

> "He desired that there should be a national body which would perform in India the functions which Her Majesty's Opposition performed in England. As the newspapers were not reliable, he considered it very desirable in the interest of the rulers as well as of the ruled that Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respects the administration was defective and how it could be improved".[2]

During the first twenty years of its existence the Congress met annually and passed resolutions asking for various political reforms of major and minor importance. It followed strictly constitutional methods; but from the beginning, the ideal was there, implied if not expressed. In fact, the manifesto issued by the leaders in March 1885 contains the following statement:

> "Indirectly this conference will form the germ of a native Parliament and, if properly conducted, will constitute in a few years an unanswerable reply to the assertion that India is wholly unfit for any form of representative institution".

2. Prof. M. A. Buch: *The Rise and Growth of Indian Liberalism*, p. 169.

The method followed was constitutional agitation which was later on characterised by the Extremists as mendicancy. There is however a passage in one of Gokhale's speeches which recognises passive resistance including even its extreme form of non-payment of taxes till redress was obtained as one of the legitimate methods of constitutional agitation, though Gokhale pointed out that what was constitutional might not be wise or expedient.[3] In 1906-1907, there was a serious split due to the differences regarding aim and method between the 'Moderates' and the 'Extremists'. The Extremists failed in their attempt to capture the Congress; but their influence intensified and strengthened the national movement and began to awaken the masses of the people. Lord Curzon's reforms, particularly the partition of Bengal, produced a fierce agitation and led to the emergence of boycott of foreign goods as a weapon to be used against foreign rule. In the Bombay Presidency, Balgangadhar

3 Buch: *The Rise and Growth of Indian Liberalism.*

Tilak emerged as a great national leader and his activities gave a new turn to the movement in the form of Hindu revivalism. Then came the Home Rule Movement organised and conducted with great ability by Mrs. Besant and it further extended and increased the hold of the Congress upon the masses. The Lucknow Congress of 1916 was a turning point in many respects. The Extremists, whose strength had been steadily increasing, came back to the Congress. Signs of closer co-operation between the Congress and the Muslim League became evident and the Lucknow Pact was the result. Over the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, the Congress split again and this time the Moderates left the Congress to form what came to be known as the 'Liberal Party'. The Rowlatt Act and Jallianwalla Bagh followed and the Gandhi phase began in 1920 and continues to the present day. Under the Mahatma's dynamic leadership, the Congress has completely shed its original character as a movement of the English knowing middle-classes and has assumed the formidable shape of a

vast mass movement. The achievement of India's freedom is the primary objective of this great organisation. For this primary purpose, it has endeavoured to bring together and consolidate all possible forces under the banner of nationalism. It has among its members and supporters, landlords and tenants, capitalists and labourers, doctors and bankers and members of the professional classes irrespective of race, religion or creed and large sections of the depressed classes also. Being so heterogeneous in its composition, it cannot lay down and pursue a definite and distinctive social and economic programme. Such a programme would involve 'a war on two fronts, a war against foreign imperialism and an internal war against vested interests within the country itself and no sane general would adopt such a strategy '.[4] On the strength of its composition, of its long struggle for national freedom for more than fifty years and of its great and unique

4 *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Oct.–Dec., 1939, p. 139.

services to the country as a whole, the Congress claims to represent all the various classes and communities in the country and this claim is, to a certain extent, just and legitimate. Even when it has functioned as a political party, it never diverted its attention or energies from the goal of national freedom. When the policy of non-co-operation failed, a fierce controversy arose between the Council entry section and the No-changers in the Congress and the Swaraj Party was born under the leadership of Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das. This party, working within the Congress, continued the policy of unflinching opposition and obstruction to British imperialism from inside the legislature. Again, after the overwhelming victory of the Congress in the greater part of India in the elections of 1937, the Congress agreed after some hesitation to form ministries in the provinces where it had a clear majority to work provincial autonomy. But at the same time, it was made quite clear both in the manifesto that preceded the election and in subsequent pronouncements that the

Congress would use its power and position to fight the proposed federation and to obtain real transfer of power to the Indian people by insisting upon a free constitution being framed by an Indian constituent Assembly. And it was because India was brought into the war without consulting the provincial ministries and without clearly defining the war aims of Britain that the Congress decided to call upon provincial ministries to resign office. All this will make it abundantly clear that the Congress is not a political party in the ordinary sense. It is fundamentally a militant organisation fighting under the domination of Gandhian Ideology, against the forces of British imperialism. The methods adopted such as non-co-operation, satyagraha, civil disobedience, may be right or wrong, wise or unwise, expedient or inexpedient, constitutional or otherwise, and we need not go into that question here. There is some force in the view that Gandhian leadership, in spite of its enormous value and services, has been unfortunate, if not disastrous, at this juncture. In particular, the rejection

of the Cripps proposals and the August resolution on civil disobedience are widely regarded as capital blunders. All this may be readily admitted but it is not fair to the Congress to apply to it the canons and standards of a political party in the western democratic sense and to denounce its actions on that basis, as some critics, particularly western critics, are apt to do. The Congress discipline, for instance, has to be much stricter and more rigid, just because it is not an ordinary political party. Granting the major premiss that it is conducting a life and death struggle against imperialism, dissidents within its ranks are naturally regarded as fifth columnists who have to be promptly expelled.

Is the Congress totalitarian? This charge has been freely and extensively levelled against the Congress not only by English critics, official and non-official, but by Mr. Jinnah himself and by some Indian Liberals. The gravamen of the charge is (1) that the Congress makes a preposterous claim that it represents the whole nation

and all Indian classes and communities; (2) that its object is to replace British Raj by Congress Raj or, alternatively in the eyes of Mr. Jinnah, Hindu Raj; (3) that the methods of the Congress High Command—the Working Committee—are undemocratic and even fascist, particularly in the enforcement of discipline and in the interference in the relations which should subsist between the provincial Congress ministries and their electorates; (4) that though it pays lip service to democracy, its ultimate aim is to establish a fascist one party State.

I have already by implication dealt with some of these points. The membership of the Congress is open to all classes and communities and, as a matter of fact, the Congress includes in its membership members of all classes and communities including Muslims and depressed classes. Further, on the strength of its sustained, devoted and valuable service to the country for over half a century and of its overwhelming victory in the greater part of India in the elections of 1937, it has a moral

claim to speak for the whole country. The Muslim League, it is true, has recently challenged and protested against this claim; but the achievement of Indian freedom which is the primary and fundamental aim of the Congress is equally, according to professions, the aim of Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League. Further, the large well-organised parties in modern democracies, and particularly in Britain, claim to speak in the interests of the whole nation and not of any particular section thereof. The Conservative Party in England may be predominantly a party of the privileged classes and the Labour Party predominantly a party of the working classes; nevertheless both parties in their policies, programmes and propaganda, claim that they are working for the benefit of the whole nation and that their proposals will not benefit some sections only.

As we have seen, the Congress is a very composite and heterogeneous body composed of various contradictory elements and conflicting economic interests which have been

brought together and kept together under the influence partly of Gandhiji's personality and dynamic leadership for the sole purpose of winning India's freedom. It is, I think, as certain as anything can be certain in Indian politics that Congress, as it exists to-day, will disintegrate and break up within a very short time after complete achievement of its purpose. It has its Right Wing, its Centre and its Left Wing, composed of irreconcilable elements strongly opposed to each other in their attitude towards social and economic issues and temporarily banded together for a common purpose. I will develop this point when I come to deal with the future of Indian political parties; but I have said enough to show the extreme improbability of India being ruled under a free constitution by Congress as constituted at present.

In the debate that took place in the House of Lords on the Indian situation in April 1942, Lord Samuel (Liberal) is reported to have spoken as follows:

"When the war came in September 1939, and the Congress Party took a hostile attitude towards the

Government of India, the Working Committee sent instructions to Congress Ministries, in provinces where they held majorities, to resign and they did resign. They resigned not because they lost the support of the Assembly, they resigned because while, *de jure*, they were responsible to their electorates, *de facto*, they were responsible to the Working Committee of the Congress and the High Command. That is not democracy; that is totalitarianism. It is essentially the same political creeds as animate nazism, fascism, communism".

This is a prominent charge levelled against the Congress by English critics (Samuel, Schuster, Coupland, and others); but it does not seem fair to the Congress. The Congress contested the elections of 1937 on the basis of definite hostility to the Government of India Act of 1935. The Working Committee's resolution permitting Congressmen to accept office and form ministries in the provinces re-asserted that the relation of the British Government to the people of India was that of exploiter and that of exploited and made it clear

"that office is to be accepted and utilised for the purpose of working in accordance with the lines laid down in the Congress Election Manifesto and to further in every possible way the Congress policy of

combating the new Act on the one hand and prosecuting a constructive programme on the other ".[5]

The election programme included (*a*) opposition to and rejection of the new constitution; (*b*) the calling of a Constituent Assembly elected on a mass basis for the purpose of determining the political and economic future of India; (*c*) the establishment of national independence; (*d*) economic measures for the relief of peasants, industrial workers and the masses generally and (*e*) the abolition of untouchability. The Congress candidates who had secured election took an oath pledging themselves to work under the discipline of the Congress for the furtherance of the Congress ideals and objectives. The provincial electorates therefore knew quite well the basis and the principle underlying the assumption of office by the Congress ministry and when the Congress ministries obeyed the mandate of the High Command and resigned office, the electorates did not protest and the assumption is therefore valid that the

5 Keith: *Constitutional History of India*, p. 482.

Working Committee was acting in consonance with public opinion. As the *Hindu* said,[6]

> "If Britain thought otherwise, it should have been the easiest thing in the world for her to hold fresh elections to the provincial legislatures. When repeatedly pressed to do, the Government's reply has invariably been that as elections would merely bring the Congress back stronger than ever, there was no point in holding them. So really, the charge of sinning against democracy should be laid at the doors of the Government and not of the Congress."

The Congress Working Committee did not interfere with the day to day work of the provincial ministries. It laid down certain broad lines of policy which its followers should work for. It was doing no more than what party organisations do in England, and what Mr. Jinnah is attempting to do at present in imitation of the Congress in respect of the League Ministries recently constituted in Bengal and Sindh. The Congress organisation, with its All-India Committee consisting of about 350 members and its small Working Committee, its provincial committees and district and

6 *The Hindu*, leading article dated April 9, 1942.

taluk committees and village committees, all formed on the elective principle, is modelled on the organisation of democratic parties. The annual session of the Congress consisting of delegates used to have very large numbers, as many as 14,000 at the Nagpur session. As the result of the changes in the constitution of the Congress mainly under Gandhiji's influence, the number of delegates has been reduced to 2,000. As I explained in the last lecture, party organisations and party discipline have progressively become stronger and more rigid in Britain and though the relation between the member and his constituents subsists to some extent, his primary duty is loyalty to his party and prompt obedience to its behests conveyed by party leaders, party whips and the party caucuses. And as we have also seen, party strategy and party tactics are dictated from above by centrally controlled party machines. As Mr. Cole well points out[7]

"the great historic parties have not been built up from below, on a basis of mass-membership, and have

7 G. D. H. Cole: *Guide to Modern Politics.*

not got their policies from the expressed will of their members. They have been created from the top, by bodies of politicians with the support of wealthy men or powerful interests, and when they have subsequently acquired a popular membership, they have usually treated their members merely as auxiliaries in the electoral struggle, and have not endowed them with any recognised power over the policy of the party. The leaders with an eye, of course, on their followers proclaim the policy; the constituency organisations are only means of getting the necessary support. In Great Britain neither the Conservative nor the Liberal Party has any wide real basis of popular control; nor have the conferences of these parties any recognised power to direct their leaders."

A number of examples may be cited from recent party history in support of this view. The Carlton Club meeting which broke up Mr. Lloyd George's Ministry after the last war, the winding up of the second Round Table Conference on India after the Tories had come out on top at the general election, Baldwin's announcement in favour of the 'Flapper Vote' without consulting his party. It is not of course a sufficient answer to the charge of autocracy of the Congress machine to say that similar autocracy prevails in the British Conservative Party. My point is that English critics,

particularly the Tories and the Liberals, are not justified in denouncing the Congress Party machine. Professor Laski has contrasted the way in which the Liberal and Conservative Parties in England respectively adopted Home Rule and Tariff Reform and the way in which the ideals of the British Labour Party have been formulated.

> "In the former, the will of a leader was practically imposed upon his followers without the latter being able to do much more than accept his policy or like Mr. Goschen and Mr. Churchill, leave the Party. In the case of the latter, by a complex machinery of advisory committees and conferences, there is a constant flow of ideas between leaders and rank and file which gives every organised opinion an opportunity if not to get adopted, at least to struggle for adoption."[8]

Further evidence in repudiation of the Fascist character of the Congress is furnished by its foreign policy. It has been consistently anti-fascist and genuinely friendly towards China and Russia. It has strongly criticised the appeasement policy followed by Britain and France towards the Axis powers before the war.

8 Laski: *A Grammar of Politics*, p. 324.

Long before Britain and her allies became enthusiastic about China and Russia, the Congress displayed its admiration and sympathy towards them.

The Muslim League is a communal party, one of its rules being that every candidate for membership of a primary branch of the League must be a Mussalman. When it was founded in 1906, its objects were (1) to promote feelings of loyalty to the British Government and (2) to protect and advance the political rights and interests of the Muslims through 'respectful representation'. The attitude of the European powers towards Turkey, the Nationalist Movement in Turkey and Persia, the rendition of the partition of Bengal in 1911, the working of the reformed Councils under the Minto-Morley reforms, the sympathy of the Indian Nationalist Press towards Turkey—all these factors contributed towards producing a national outlook in the Muslim League. In 1913, the League constitution was amended and the attainment of a system of self-govern-

ment suitable to India was adopted as its ideal and the promotion of national unity as the chief method of attainment. The Congress and League now began to co-operate and the Congress League Pact of 1916 known as the Lucknow Pact and the Congress-League Reforms Scheme marked the triumph of the nationalist Muslims. The eleventh session of the League in 1918 demanded self-determination for India and in 1920 the League supported the Congress programme of Civil Disobedience as the result of Jallianwalla Bagh, the Martial Law Regime in the Punjab, and Gandhiji's championship of the Khilafat cause. Then came the split in the League in 1927 over the Simon Commission and the rejection of the Nehru report in 1928 by the All Parties Muslim Conference. After a period of decline and dissension the League was re-organised in 1934, and up to 1937 it supported the ideals of nationalism and democracy. In his presidential address at the Lucknow session of the League in October 1937, Mr. Jinnah said: "The Muslim League stands for full national

democratic self-government of India." But signs of the coming reversal of policy and programme were already visible. In the course of the address referred to above, Mr. Jinnah said:

> "The present leadership of the Congress, especially during the last ten years, has been responsible for alienating the Mussalmans of India more and more by pursuing a policy which is exclusively Hindu, and since they have formed governments in six provinces where they are in majority, they have by their words, deeds and programme shown that the Mussalmans cannot expect any justice or fair play at their hands. On the very threshold of what little power and responsibility is given, the majority community have clearly shown their hand that Hindustan is for the Hindus." [9]

From 1938, the League displayed growing hostility to the Congress and complaints against the tyranny of the Congress Raj. increased. The Congress was denounced as having become a communal Hindu body. When the Congress wanted to secure from the British Government a satisfactory statement of their war aims, the All-India

9 *The Communal Triangle in India*, p. 43. Also, *The Indian Annual Register*, Vol. II, p. 403.

Congress Committee called upon the ministries in the provinces to resign as a protest against India being dragged into the war without her consent. It was hoped that in consequence of this resignation and in view of the forthcoming talks between Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Nehru on the communal question, the situation would improve. But Mr. Jinnah threw a bombshell by ordering all branches of the Muslim League to celebrate the exit of the Congress Ministries by observing a Deliverance Day. This action destroyed all hopes of a Congress-League reconciliation. Then came the two nation theory and the now famous Pakistan Resolution which was passed at the Lahore session of the League in March 1940. At the next session at Madras in 1941, the constitution of the League was amended incorporating the goal of Pakistan into the creed of the Muslim League. As indicated above, the immediate cause of the fateful change in the League policy and programme was the failure of the Congress-League negotiations for the

formation of coalition ministries in the Congress majority provinces and the subsequent formation of pure Congress ministries; but there were also other causes. The overwhelming success of the Congress in the elections of 1937 in the greater part of India, the failure on the part of the Muslim League in winning power in any of the four provinces in which Muslims have a majority and the consequent formation of coalition ministries in those provinces, fears aroused by the proposed 'Muslim Mass Contacts Programme' of the Congress, the loss of the temporary advantages which the Muslims had secured by the formation of interim ministries in the Congress majority provinces—most of the interim premiers were Muslims—all these causes produced a feeling of insecurity and made the Muslims feel that unless they reorganised and closed up their ranks and came under the banner of one political body and formulated a programme that would make an appeal to the Muslim masses to whom franchise had been extended recently, the Muslim cause

would be lost.[10] As Mr. Gurumukh Nihal Singh says,

> "it suddenly dawned upon the League with the force of a revelation that the Muslims were doomed to perpetual opposition and permanent denial of a share in power in the Congress majority provinces and at the centre where they are in a minority."[11]

Hence the two-nation theory, the unsuitability of democracy to Indian conditions and Pakistan which is a demand for partition, the formation of separate Muslim States in the west and the east and no central Government at all, no federation, not even a confederation. In support of this new policy, Mr. Jinnah and other leaders of the League carried on an intensive and astute propaganda. Slogans, atrocity stunts, cries of religion in danger were adopted. Several observers, Dr. Beni Prasad,[12] Asoka Mehta and Achyut Pat-

10 *The Communal Triangle in India.*

11 Principal Gurumukh Nihal Singh's Presidential Address at the Political Science Conference—Indian Journal of Political Science, April–June, 1943, p. 393.

12 *The Hindu-Muslim Question.*

wardhan,[13] Gurumukh Nihal Singh and others have drawn attention to the close resemblance between the Muslim League propaganda and the methods adopted by the Sudetan Germans in Czechoslovakia in October 1938.

"The entire course of events was fully reported and closely observed in India, as elsewhere, because it brought Europe to the verge of war in September 1938 and convinced all in March 1939 that a world war had become unavoidable. The progress of the Sudetan demands from a larger share in administration and policy to a repudiation of minority status, the claim to separate nationhood, the denial of Czechoslovak unity, charges of atrocities and oppression unsupported by evidence, the demand for frontier revision, the advocacy of a virtual partition together with the claim of 50 per cent share in the residual central organisation—all these features in the Sudetan movement in 1936–38 found their counterpart in the resolutions of the Muslim League in 1939-41. In fact, some of the phrases employed are identical."[14]

The success of the League in rallying the Muslims under this new banner has been remarkable. Of the 480 seats reserved for Muslims under the Government of India Act of 1935, out of a total of 1581 in all the

13 *The Communal Triangle in India.*
14 Dr. Beni Prasad: *The Hindu Muslim Question*, p. 72.

11 provincial Legislative Assemblies in British India, the Muslim League was able to win in the general elections of 1937 only 104 seats representing 4.6 per cent of the total Muslim votes.' The remaining 376 seats were captured by other Muslim groups who did not support the League.[15] But to-day, the situation is very different. The other Muslim groups have been disintegrated or absorbed in the Muslim League and Muslim League Ministries have been recently established in Bengal, Sindh and probably also in the Punjab. The strength of the Muslim League has grown in a most remarkable manner in the course of five years. The recognition of the principle of self-determination in the provinces under the Cripps proposals and the readiness to accept Pakistan of a Congress leader of the eminence of Sri C. Rajagopalachari have further contributed to the growing ascendancy of the League among the Muslims.

15 Palme Dutt: *India To-day*, p. 420, quoted in *The Communal Triangle in India*, p. 171.

It has been argued with considerable force by many students of Indian affairs that the Congress committed a serious tactical blunder in forming homogeneous Congress ministries in the provinces and excluding non-Congress elements. It would have been wiser and more expedient on the part of the Congress to have included representatives of non-Congress parties in its ministries. Such a step would have instilled a feeling of confidence among the minorities, neutralised the feeling of hostility towards the Congress and enabled the Congress to pursue its national policy and constructive programme with greater success and harmony. The validity of this point of view has to be admitted and also the fact that the consequences of the Congress decision to form homogeneous party ministries on the British Parliamentary model have been unfortunate if not disastrous. It would however not be fair to accuse the Congress of a deep design to establish Hindu Raj in the name of Parliamentary democracy. As Dr. Asirvatham

aptly puts it,[16] the Congress attitude was that it was wrong to dilute the pure milk of nationalism with the communalism of the Muslim League or other avowedly communal parties. It may be that its overwhelming success in several provinces went to its head and it was decided to liquidate communalism at one stroke. This was hasty and unwise because it should have been obvious that what the minorities and particularly the Muslims care for and are keen about are not so much safeguards for religion, culture, language etc., which can all be readily conceded, but a share in political power and the denial of such a share to all-non-Congress elements far from liquidating communalism aggravated it. The only effective and practicable way of counteracting communalism and preparing the ground for the rise of genuine political parties, is the formation and the sustained pursuit of a comprehensive social and economic programme. Some of the leaders

16 Article on "Coalition or Composite Cabinets" in *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, July–Sept., 1942.

of the Congress realise this; but owing to various reasons, there is a certain half-heartedness and luke-warmness in carrying out this policy. The tremendous growth of power and influence of the Muslim League in recent years is a very good illustration of how stunts and slogans and panic affect the popular mind and lead to the growth and decline of parties. In England, the Khaki elections of 1900 and 1918, 'the Zinoviev' letter in 1924 and the Post Office Savings Scare of 1931 are illustrations of the same tendency.

The unfortunate effects of the formation of Congress party Governments on the British model have provoked a discussion which is still going on among students of Indian affairs as to the relative merits of cabinet versus coalition or composite ministries. This is a very complicated question involving a comparative study of different constitutions and I have neither the time nor the space at my disposal to deal with it in the course of this lecture. As Dr. Asirvatham points out in the reference quoted

above, Sir C. R. Reddy favours an all party cabinet and the late Mr. Srinivasa Aiyangar proposed a non-party cabinet.[17] Neither proposal seems to be satisfactory in my opinion. The former takes a short view of politics in India and does not appear to give adequate consideration to the long range tendencies which are likely to give rise to genuine political parties. The latter does not appear to display correct understanding of the working of the party system and of modern democracies. Parties—communal or otherwise—are bound to arise and grow in strength as the size of the electorate increases with periodical extensions of the suffrage and it is a piece of wishful thinking to imagine that they can be dispensed with. Several writers have recommended Governments of the Swiss Federal Executive Type—known as the Collegiate type—as the most suitable for Indian conditions. Switzerland among the democracies has practically no major problems to contend with. Its Government calls for no long

17 *Problems of Democracy in India.*

range policies, no planning, and no programmes. How can the Swiss type of executive meet the needs or face the problems of the Government of India or even of Provincial Governments? The Government of a large country which has to deal with social and economic problems of great complexity and magnitude cannot be organised on the basis merely of the distribution of power among various minorities. There is work to be done, important and urgent and difficult work, and the electorates and the legislatures are not expert bodies. Strong and well-organised parties animated by a common purpose are necessary for the Government of a great country. The satisfaction of minority elements and communal claims is of course necessary as temporary expedients, but it cannot and ought not to be made the permanent and fundamental basis of the structure of Government.

I have already indicated that genuine political parties cannot arise in India so long as the struggle for freedom has to be

carried on and remains the sole pre-occupation of political life. But there is also another reason, namely, that the rulers are interested in giving a twist to political life and in patronising and supporting parties and movements whose activities are calculated to counteract and weaken the national struggle. The Congress Nationalists and even some who claim to be disinterested objective and scientific observers like Mr. Gurumukh Nihal Singh have built up a strong case in support of this view. The origins of the Muslim League and its evolution at certain critical phases of its history have been cited to illustrate this thesis. The late Sir Syed Ahmed who exercised enormous influence on Muslim opinion in the last century was originally a patriot and a nationalist. He came under the subtle influence of Mr. Beck, the Principal of the Aligarh College at the time. His views changed and Sir Syed Ahmed strongly advised his co-religionists to keep away from the Congress. In 1893 was founded the first purely Muslim organisation called Mahomedan Anglo-Oriental Defence Asso-

ciation of Upper India with Principal Beck as one of the secretaries with the following objects: (1) To protect the political rights of the Muslims, (2) to support measures that would strengthen British rule in India, (3) to spread feelings of loyalty among the people and (4) to prevent the spread of political agitation among the Muslims. Nawab Saleemulla Khan who was a staunch opponent of the partition of Bengal was won over to support it. Soon after the partition, the Government advanced to the Nawab Sahib a loan of £ 100,000 at a low rate of interest.[18] The Muslim deputation which waited upon Lord Minto in 1906 led by H. H. Aga Khan was according to Maulana Mahomed Ali, 'a command performance'. All arrangements regarding the deputation were made through Principal Archbold of the Aligarh College and even the text of the address was prepared by him. The deputation asked for separate communal electorates, weightage etc., and

18 Gurumukh Nihal Singh: *Landmarks in Indian Constitutional Development*, p. 319.

in his reply, H. E. Lord Minto without consulting the Secretary of State, accepted these demands and thus started the 'Muslim hare' as Lord Morley puts it. Lord Morley himself would have preferred a scheme of joint electoral colleges which would have secured to each community a fair and adequate representation. Ramsay Macdonald wrote as follows:[19]

> "The Mahomedan leaders are inspired by certain Anglo-Indian officials and these officials have pulled wires at Simla and in London and of malice afore-thought sowed discord between the Hindu and Mahomedan communities by showing the Muslims special favours".

When the Simon Commission was visiting India, Lord Birkenhead, the Secretary of State, wrote to the Viceroy of India that the Commission should meet Muslims and depressed classes as much as possible.

> "The whole policy is now obvious. It is to terrify the immense Hindu population by the apprehension that the Commission is being got hold of by the Muslims and might present a report altogether destructive of the Hindu position thereby securing solid Muslim support and leaving Jinnah high and dry." [20]

19 *Awakening India*, p. 176.
20 K. B. Krishna: *The Problem of Minorities*, p. 38.

But perhaps the most glaring example of British diplomacy was the dramatic announcement made by Sir Samuel Hoare in London regarding Muslim demands while the Allahabad Unity Conference was sitting. His Majesty's Government gave the Muslims more than what they had asked for and were ready to accept in the negotiations at Allahabad.[21] The split in the Congress between the Moderates and the Extremists over the issue of the Montagu Reforms has been traced partly to the influence of Montagu. The late Sir C. Y. Chintamani quoted evidence[22] in his book, *Indian Politics since the Mutiny,* in support of the view that the Justice Party movement in Madras bore traces of official support if not inspiration. As early as 1932, Mr. Coatman dropped a hint about Pakistan.

> "The creation of a strong United India is day by day being made impossible and in its place, it seems there might be brought into being a powerful

21 *The Communal Triangle in India,* p. 76.
22 Pp. 116 and 117.

Mahomedan State in the north and north-west with its eye definitely turned away from India."[23]

Be this as it may, the greatest obstacle to the formation of genuine political parties—and in fact, to the working of responsible government in India—is the existence of communal electorates. Whatever may have been their origin, the Muslims and other communities to a lesser extent swear by it and Congress accepted it by the conclusion of the Lucknow Pact in 1916. Our rulers have repeatedly deplored the necessity for providing for separate electorates and have repeatedly extended their scope until at last under the communal award, there are some fourteen separate communities and interests that are given separate representation. This has led to the balkanisation of Indian political life and made it inevitable that it should run on communal lines. If there is a future for responsible government and democratic institutions in our country, free India will have on the one hand to secularise

23 J. Coatman: *Years of Destiny—India 1926-1932*, quoted in *The Communal Triangle in India*. p. 79.

politics and by a vigorous social and economic programme create genuine political parties and, on the other, reform the electoral system by the substitution of methods other than communal electorates for securing fair and adequate representation to all communities. Proportional representation with single transferable vote, joint electorates with reservation of seats, and the proviso that a certain proportion of the votes secured by a winning candidate should be those of the community to which he belongs are alternatives which should be considered. An anonymous writer who calls himself an Indian student of Political Science has made another valuable suggestion.[24] His proposal is that in each area, there should be two constituencies—one for the majority community and the other for *all* minority communities put together—a joint minority constituency. These two need not actually coincide territorially. The number of seats in the

24 *The Key of Freedom and Security in India*, by an *Indian Student of Political Science*, Oxford University Press, 1933.

legislature is not to be fixed beforehand, but to be determined by the number of qualified voters. A small expert committee will effect the initial division of constituencies. This division will be tentative and subject to revision. Voters on either side can transfer themselves to the opposite side by requesting the electoral authority to so transfer them. Each side will thus be stimulated to put forward beneficent schemes and this will create machinery for setting up an alternative Government. By this device, minority communities will not only get effective representation, but the opportunity of actual power. This proposal aims at utilising existing communal diversities as raw material for the formation of genuine political parties which will exercise vigilant mutual restraint and compete with each other in healthy rivalry in devising beneficial schemes for the public welfare. This suggestion is eminently worth consideration. Mr. Jinnah may have had something similar in view when he attempted to rally the other minorities, depressed classes for instance. Why should not parties

opposed to the Congress, form a coalition of their own and present an alternative ministry by offering a better programme to the electorate? As Dr. Asirvatham points out, the non-Congress parties all profess hatred of the Congress, its leadership and its policy, but are not prepared to join together for carrying out a common programme or for lifting politics from the communal slough. The existing electoral system is to a large extent to blame for the present situation. The communal electorates with weightage have been in existence since 1909. But obviously they have not satisfied the Muslims. Even with all the necessary safeguards, the minority remains a minority. What they really need and what they are blindly seeking for is a share of actual power. Various suggestions have been made towards this end and they all deserve careful consideration in the making of a new constitution: Governorships of provinces and headships of the Central Federal Government to be held by the communities in rotation; committee system to be introduced in the Legislature on the

American or Continental model and not the British; all matters which normally create disagreement between communities to be listed and a standard procedure to be laid down in the constitution to settle such disputes by reference to competent tribunals; the whole subject of appointments to be taken out of party politics and placed in the hands of non-political service commissioners; coalition cabinets where no party has a strong majority.[25]

And in fact for the building up of national unity, the secularization of politics and the pursuit of a vigorous social and economic programme are absolutely necessary. Owing to the establishment of separate communal electorates, the influence exercised by orthodox Hindus in the Congress and the spirit of Hindu Revivalism which has animated some of the leaders of the Congress, there has been increasing

25 *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, October–December 1942, Article on *Making Democracy Safe for India*, by Mr. D. G. Karve. See also page 5 of P. R. Society Pamphlet No. 85, dated June 1940.

danger of Congress being represented as a Hindu organisation. Mrs. Besant and the Theosophists, Tilak and Mahatma Gandhi himself have been, to some extent, responsible for this. As Principal Gurumukh Nihal Singh well puts it,[26]

> "The result was that a nationalist movement could not evolve a common source of inspiration or a common national language or ritual anthem and symbols which could make an equal appeal to all sections of the people. Again, for the sake of outward unity, social reform was eschewed."

Hindu tea and Muslim water are not compatible with national unity. Hence, the two-nation theory and hence the fear of the Muslims that a democratic constitution for India would, in practice, result in Hindu Raj, the perpetual domination of the Hindu majority and the permanent exclusion of the Muslim minority from political power. I am aware of and fully sympathise with the difficulties that have beset the Congress in the past in carrying out the policy indicated above. It is also to be recorded that, with

26 *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, Presidential address, p. 387.

a view to reassure the Muslims, the Congress President has definitely stated that he had no objection to Britain handing over power to the Muslim League or any other party, provided it was real independence. And Mahatma Gandhi has, in his reply to a letter addressed to him by a Muslim citizen of Bombay, stated in as clear a language as possible that this proposal had been made in all seriousness and sincerity.[27] Mr. Jinnah's contention that the Congress seeks to establish Hindu Raj cannot, therefore, be taken seriously. While denouncing the Congress, Mr. Jinnah follows its methods in the organisation and work of the League. If imitation is the best form of flattery, Mr. Jinnah is a great admirer of the Congress. Compare, for instance, the League High Command's attempted control over Muslim ministries in Bengal, Sindh and the Punjab. For doing the same thing, he denounced the Congress as a totalitarian caucus. Mr. Jinnah's Pakistan has involved him in a

27 *Jinnah Sahib Please*, Unity Series, No. 1, p. 54.

number of contradictions and anomalies. What is Pakistan, he will not explain, define or commit himself in any way. Democracy is unsuited for India. If so, what form of Government is he going to establish in his Pakistan? He will not tell us. Muslim safeguards have failed. So he wants Pakistan. But, when he is asked about protection of Hindu and Sikh and other minority interests in Pakistan, he tells you he will provide the amplest mandatory safeguards. The fact that Mr. Jinnah will not commit himself to any blue print regarding Pakistan or any definite statement about the form of Government to be established in the Pakistan provinces or the nature of the safeguards for the minorities, the fact above all that he demands the acceptance of Pakistan as the condition precedent for even the starting of negotiations for a settlement—all these lead one to infer that Pakistan is a kind of temporary stunt or slogan for organising the Muslims as a compact and powerful body for purposes of bargaining, that in fact it is a kind of

'Dutch auction'.

As a counterblast to the All-India Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha has come into existence for the avowed object of protecting the rights of the Hindus. Its social programme is conservative, if not reactionary, and it radically differs from the Congress over the issue of non-violence. The revival of the military glories of the Hindus is one of its definite objects. It takes a militant attitude against the Muslim League, and while ready to concede separate electorates, refuses to grant the Muslims weightage or any representation in the legislatures or in the services in excess of their population ratio. Both the League and the Sabha denounce the Congress for opposite reasons and their leaders have been called 'Field-Marshals of the Platform'. Originally, the Sabha was started as a cultural and not as a political movement. But, it got a distinct political colour soon. The Suddhi and the Sangathan Movements increased the tension between

the two communities. In 1933, the Mahasabha came out in open opposition to the Congress. With the assumption of the presidentship of the Sabha by Savarkar, the opposition has become more intense. In the words of Mr. Savarkar, the aim of the organisation is

> "the maintenance, protection and promotion of the Hindu Race, Hindu culture, and Hindu civilization and the advancement of the glory of Hindu rashtra, and with a view to secure them, the attainment of Purna Swaraj, *i.e.*, absolute political independence for Hindustan by legitimate means." [28]

Like the League, the Mahasabha is wedded to the politics of power and cares nothing for the true welfare of India as a whole. Other communal parties are those of the Anglo-Indians, Indian Christians, the Sikhs and some sections of the depressed classes. The Justice Party of Madras stands midway between a communal party and a political party. Mr. Guy Wint says that its speciality is Brahmin-baiting.[29] But this is not quite fair. It is true that

28 *The Communal Triangle of India*, p. 190.
29 *India and Democracy*, p. 187.

one of its primary aims has been to destroy the monopoly of place and power which the Brahmins have enjoyed in certain parts of India, particularly in Madras, parts of Bombay and the Central Provinces. But it has also a wider social programme which includes an attack on the tyranny of caste and the domination of the priesthood over the lives of non-Brahmin communities. It professes to work for the establishment of social justice—equality of opportunity to all and injustice to none. In Madras, it was at one period strong enough to win elections and ministerial power in straight fights with the Congress. In its earlier days, it included members from all communities except the Brahmins. But even Brahmins are now admitted as members if they are prepared to accept its creed and support its policy. It is now losing rather than gaining ground. Its left wing appears to have a socially radical programme which makes an appeal to the younger generation. The left wing has recently raised the cry of Home Rule for Dravidian India—Dravidastan. Lord Halifax who was

Viceroy of India as Lord Irwin (1926-33) has expressed the opinion that the Justice Party will perhaps be the first to develop into a true non-communal party.[30] The Unionist Party in the Punjab is also worthy of prominent mention. It is a genuine Political Party founded on a non-communal basis. It was carefully nurtured by the wisdom and statesmanship of the late Sir Fasli Hussain. In the elections of 1937, this party was able to defeat the other parties, the Congress, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Muslim League, Ahrars and Akhalis and to obtain an absolute majority in the Legislature. This is because it is well-organized with a clear economic programme of agrarian uplift.

> "The economic readjustment and planning of the province is the main plank of the party's programme. The Party pledged itself to work for agricultural and industrial development, the raising of income and production per head, the relief of indebtedness, the removal of unemployment and an equitable adjustment of the reasonable claims of landlords and tenants, of employers and labourers."

In the Punjab, the Congress Party is weak

30 Sir John Cumming: *Political India*, 1832–1932, p. 20.

in organisation and suffers from internal dissension. Compared with the Unionist Party, the Punjab Congress has the appearance of being a coterie of a few capitalists. The agrarian legislation of the Unionist Ministry has strengthened its hold in the Punjab. 'About 120 members in a house of 175 have been consistent in accepting the Party's Whip.' So long as Sir Sikhandar was alive, the Muslim League was not allowed to interfere in the working of the Unionist Party, though he was a member of the League and accepted its obligations in all-India matters. The situation appears to have changed recently, and Mr. Jinnah has administered a warning to the new Prime Minister that in future the Unionist Party should toe the line of the Muslim League. Non-Muslim Ministers have protested against the interference of the Muslim League. The exact relations at the present moment are rather obscure.

The Communist Party has recently come into prominence and at the last annual congress of the Party at Bombay, it was

claimed that its membership had greatly increased in recent years. It is organised on the lines of Communist Parties in other parts of the world with the 'cell' in a factory or a mill or a basti or a village as its primary unit. Until recently, it worked underground as its aims were avowedly revolutionary based on the dictatorship of the Proletariat to be established if necessary by violence. Its discipline is very strict. Now and particularly since Russia came into the war, it has been allowed to work openly. Its programme is to carry on vigorous propaganda for intensifying the war effort in India, and to strengthen the anti-fascist front. At the same time it is anti-imperialistic and while denouncing Gandhism, it stands for the independence of India and presses the Government to negotiate a settlement with the Congress and the League with a view to establish a provisional national Government. For this purpose, it is willing to concede the Muslim demand for Pakistan and the autonomy of nationalities in India on the model of the constitution of the U.S.S.R. Its organ

Peoples' War conducts very able propaganda on these lines. The allegation against the Party is that in the name of war effort and the anti-fascist front, it is really creating disaffection against the Government both in British India and in the Indian States and rousing class consciousness among the workers and the peasants. It has also been alleged that a number of Congressmen have drifted into the Party. It appears to have a great attraction and to make a strong appeal to sections of the younger generation of our countrymen who are 'fed up' with Gandhian ideology and Gandhian tactics.

Future of Parties in India. The alignment and development of Parties in the free India of the future will depend on so many unpredictable factors that it may seem rash and unprofitable to attempt a forecast at present. A great deal will depend on the nature of the constitution that will be devised, the relations between the Executive and the Legislature in the Centre and in the Provinces, the tenure of

office of the Executives, the nature of the suffrage, the electoral system, the nature of the settlement between Hindus and Muslims, the nature of the safeguards, the character and relations of the Central Government *vis a vis* the Provincial Governments and the Indian States and so on. One thing, as I have already indicated, appears to be certain, namely that the Congress, on account of its heterogeneous character cannot continue to exist in its present form. The Left Wing of the Congress—The Congress Socialist Party—denounces the Congress as a bourgeois organisation and the slogan of 'class war' has been raised. This section may succeed in capturing the Congress machinery and organisation and transforming it either into a Socialist Party on the European model based on Marxian ideology or a Labour and Peasants' Party on the model of the English Labour Party based on evolutionary socialism and Parliamentary democracy. The latter is more probable as the slogans of 'class war' and Dictatorship of the Proletariat appear to be premature in the India

of to-day. The Right Wing and the Centre of the Congress—predominantly the middle class sections—will probably secede and organise a party or parties on the lines of the Right and Centre Parties of Continental Europe. The present Liberal Party which contains men distinguished in intellect and talents—though politically the least effective at present—may furnish the leadership required for these new Right and Centre Parties. If they are able to evolve a well-considered and comprehensive policy of social and economic reform and attractive programmes for the amelioration of the conditions of peasants and labourers, the relief of unemployment, industrialisation, mobilization of productive resources and improvement of the standard of life, they should be able either singly or by the coalition of groups to hold their own against the left parties. The latter, assisted by politico-economic organisations such as the Trade Union Congress and the Kisan Sabhas, will certainly become a formidable force in the politics of the future. Communal Parties will undoubtedly not disappear immediately

or in the near future, particularly if communal electorates continue. But they are bound to decline in strength and importance as economic issues and social problems emerge and lead to formation of parties cutting across communal divisions. We can afford to indulge in communal politics to our hearts' content at present because we have no responsibility for the Government of the country. Every prospective transfer of power produces heightening of communal tension and power politics take the field; but once power has been transferred to the satisfaction of major communities, communal politics will gradually recede into the background. Parties will be judged then not by the attractiveness of their stunts and slogans, but by their record of work and achievement for the welfare of the people. Moreover, there are forces which are working—feebly perhaps at present but more strongly in the future—towards the weakening of communalism and the growth of a national outlook. The younger generations of both Muslims and Hindus particularly among

the educated classes, are growing increasingly sceptical about religion which they consider a disruptive force. Again, as Guy Wint aptly points out,[31]

> "The conception of Islam as a nationality in itself regardless of race or religion, seems to be out of date. The Turks are entirely nationalist, the Arabs nearly so and if a constitutional *modus vivendi* could be found in India, it might well be that Indian Muslims would again become good Indian Patriots."

Further, a large programme of national education will be undertaken and in course of time, the electorate will be able to discriminate between false and real issues. We may conclude therefore that political parties in India would develop much as they have developed in other countries. Parties based on differences of religion and community will tend to disappear and parties based on genuine social and economic issues will take their place.

It has to be noted however that some of our prominent political leaders appear to favour the one party dictatorship for India. But this is a doctrinaire attitude which

31 *India and Democracy*, p. 184.

takes little account of the realities of Indian life. Communism and Fascism arose under specially favouring conditions in certain countries and such conditions do not exist in India at present. The conditions that do exist favour the growth of democratic systems of government in the provinces and in the centre. Whatever the distant future may hold, the next phase of political development in India appears to be Parliamentary Democracy and political parties will play an increasingly important part in the working of that system of government.

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